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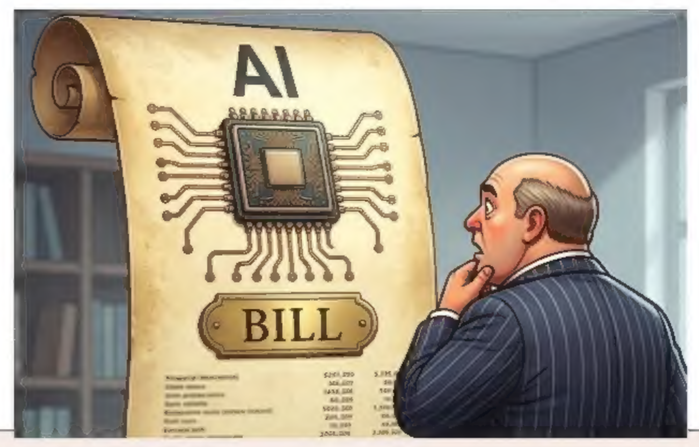

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FACED WITH HIGH COSTS, U.S. FIRMS LOOK TO CUT BACK ON AI SPENDING

Faced with steep IT costs, many US tech firms including Microsoft are ditching expensive AI agents like Claude Code, *Axios* reported

U.S. COMPANY GETS $500 MILLION CLAUDE SHOCK

Microsoft has reportedly cancelled most of its Claude Code licenses partly due to high costs, according to the *Axios* report. The tool had become highly popular inside the company since its introduction in December. As per the report, an unnamed US company spent half a billion dollars in a month after failing to put usage limits on Claude licenses for its employees

POOR RETURN ON INVESTMENT IS THE PAIN POINT

- While AI costs keep piling up, companies using the technology have yet to see meaningful returns on their investment, the report said
- But corporations are not ditching AI altogether, the report noted. Instead, they are looking for cheaper alternatives that can deliver similar results without draining their IT budgets

70%

OF FORTUNE 100 COMPANIES USE CLAUDE, AS PER REPORTS

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

Guv accepts Siddu's resignation; CLP meet today to pick DKS as CM

Siddaramaiah pushes loyalists to DCM, minister posts; oath-taking not later than June 6

PREETHA NAIR, BALA CHAUHAN & DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI @New Delhi/Bengaluru

GOVERNOR Thaawarchand Gehlot on Friday morning accepted Siddaramaiah's resignation as chief minister, paving the way for the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) meeting in Bengaluru to elect DK Shivakumar as new CM – scheduled for 4pm on Saturday. Hectic day-long negotiations were on in Delhi over the new cabinet and ministerial berths. Shivakumar's oath-taking, however, remains undecided with a combination of dates being considered, but is expected to be completed in the coming week.

Governor Gehlot, on accepting the resignation, dissolved the council of ministers under Siddaramaiah, who was yet to arrive in Bengaluru at the time. Siddaramaiah will continue as CM until "alternative arrangements are made", according to a notification from Lok Bhavan.

Those very "alternative arrangements" are, however, being worked out with the Saturday-afternoon CLP under the chairmanship of the outgoing CM Siddaramaiah electing Shivakumar as its leader and later Shivakumar visiting Lok Bhavan to stake claim to form the new government.

Shivakumar is likely to be sworn in no later than June 6. His mentor, spiritual guru and astrologer Rajguru Bellur Sankaranarayanan Dwarakanath, told TNIE, "I told him to consider any of the three dates (May 31, June 5 or June 6) for oath-taking as they are auspicious for him. The time will however be 4 pm," he said.

Meanwhile, hectic parleys were on in New Delhi where Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar met with the party high command, which is keen on two deputy chief ministers (DCMs), though there are ongoing discussions about having four. "The party central leadership has reportedly approved two DCMs, but it is a fluid situation," said sources on condition of anonymity.

It is learnt that the party high command has assured Siddaramaiah about his son and MLC Dr Yathindra's induction into the cabinet, so also former ministers G Parameshwara and Priyank Kharge. Sources said Siddaramaiah suggested to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi that Yathindra and former ministers KJ George and MB Patil be appointed DCMs. P4,5

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and LoP in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi being greeted by CM-in-waiting D K Shivakumar, in New Delhi on Friday | EXPRESS

10-member initial cabinet

Sources said DKS will be sworn in with nine others — including picks by Siddaramaiah — in the initial cabinet that will be expanded after the June 18 RS polls. Plans are on for the ceremony on the grand steps of Vidhana Soudha

Jarkiholi on short list

The names of former ministers Ramalinga Reddy, George, Satish Jarkiholi and Byrathi Suresh are likely to be on the list on nine probables. Both Siddaramaiah and DKS have given their lists of MLAs for ministerial berths

NEET-UG PAPER LEAK

PM supervising retest, says govt as SC raps NTA

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Friday advised the National Testing Agency (NTA) to learn from bodies like the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) that conduct large-scale competitive exams without paper leaks. The court made the observation while hearing a batch of pleas filed by the United Doctors Front and the Federation of All India Medical Associations seeking the disbanding of the NTA over the NEET-UG paper leak and the upcoming retest.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, assured the court that the government was treating the matter with utmost seriousness. "The Prime Minister is personally supervising the situation," he said, adding the government plans to eventually shift NEET-UG to computer-based testing.

"UPSC has never been in such a situation. You need to learn. General liability clauses were not enough. The real problem won't stop till actual accountability arises. Unless you identify the specific duty bearers, it will be difficult," the bench said.

"The problem is that most institutions are ad hoc. It's a phenomenon that is everywhere in the country. It's not the individual who has the capability but the institution," Justice Narasimha observed.

He asked the Centre to file an affidavit specifying how an "institutional memory of continuity" could be built by employing specialised personnel, enabling the NTA to conduct exams reliably in future.

Dr K Radhakrishnan, the head of the monitoring committee to suggest recommendations to strengthen NEET, described the structural deficiencies within the NTA in 2024, including the lack of sufficient domain experts. He added that major reforms had been undertaken in the transport of question papers as well, which had previously been vulnerable.

The court suggested a permanent, small monitoring mechanism with top universities and IITs to continuously assess and strengthen the system, especially with new technologies like AI.

AI-based tools shall be used for at least 85% of translation work to minimise human intervention... Randomisation, rotation is being institutionalised for engagement of paper setters, moderators, vetters, translators for exams

NTA affidavit

Systemic gaps 'fixed' for retest

Radhakrishnan, who headed the monitoring committee in 2024 to strengthen NEET, said the panel had submitted 35 long-term and 60 short-term suggestions, most of which had been implemented. He assured the court that the vulnerabilities exposed this year had been addressed for the retest next month

Guv sore over partial Vande Mataram in Kerala House

SOVI VIDYADHARAN @T'puram

VANDE Mataram once again emerged as the centrepiece of a tussle between the UDF government in Kerala and the Lok Bhavan after the Union government's directive to render the national song in its entirety was not followed at the inaugural session of the 16th Kerala Legislative Assembly.

Instead, the Kerala Police band played only the opening stanza. While it marked the first time that Vande Mataram was rendered in the assembly, the omission of the remaining stanzas drew strong objections from Governor **Rajendra Arlekar**, who delivered the UDF government's maiden policy address in the House.

Arlekar told reporters that the Lok Bhavan had, a day earlier, insisted that the national song be sung or played in full in accordance with protocol. He said he had raised the matter with Speaker Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan. "Let us see how things develop," he said.

Chief Minister V D Satheesan defended the decision to play only the opening portion of Vande Mataram. "We all function based on the decision the (Congress) party has taken. Besides, it is not mandatory. Parliament has not passed any legislation on it. It is only a guideline," he told reporters.

The BJP termed the truncated rendition an "affront" to the governor and the Lok Bhavan. Interestingly, the UDF found support from an unlikely quarter, with the Opposition LDF backing its stand.

Dispute over farm: Six killed in Vijayapura

FIROZ ROZINDAR @ Vijayapura

IN a gruesome crime that sent shockwaves across Vijayapura district, six persons were brutally murdered at Govindapura village in Chadachan taluk on Friday, allegedly over a long-standing agricultural land dispute.

The deceased were identified as Revanasiddappa Nirale, Dundappa Nirale, Shivaputra Nirale, Chandrashekhar Nirale, Rahul Nirale, all from the same family, and Shabbir Nadaf, a labourer who had come to work in the field.

Initial reports said violence erupted over a disputed 25-acre agricultural land involving the Nirale family and another powerful family from the same Neevaragi village of Chadchan taluk.

Sources said the Nirale family had recently purchased the land from the Teli family.

The accused family had strongly opposed the Nirale family buying the land from Telis, claiming that the property was under dispute for the last 15-16 years. The Teli family had not cultivated the land during that period. CONTINUED ON: P7

Auto driver dies after wall of club collapses as heavy rain pounds city

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

A 56-year-old autorickshaw driver died when part of the compound wall of Vijayanagar Club at RPC Layout collapsed on his vehicle during heavy rain on Friday evening.

The deceased has been identified as Shivaboraiah, a resident of Attiguppe. He was sitting in his autorickshaw when the 12-foot-high compound wall of the club's swimming pool collapsed on it around 6.45pm.

Policemen removed Shivaboraiah from the mangled autorickshaw and rushed him to a nearby hospital where he was declared dead on arrival.

His body was shifted to the mortuary of Victoria Hospital for postmortem.

Police suspect that Shivaboraiah might have been waiting for passengers when the compound wall collapsed on his vehicle.

Apart from the autorickshaw, a goods carrier and three electric poles were damaged.

Meanwhile, Shivaboraiah's relative Divya told reporters that he went to a nearby hospital where his aged mother is being treated for some illness. Shivaboraiah's wife and son were at home when the incident happened. P2

46mm rain in Bengaluru

Bengaluru recorded moderate to heavy rain accompanied by thunderstorms on Friday. The IMD observatory in the city recorded 46mm rain between 8.30am and 8.30pm. The automatic weather station recorded 44.5mm rain and HAL Airport 20.8mm.

GILL GOES FOR KILLER STRIKE

VAIBHAV SIZZLES BUT GT HAVE LAST LAUGH

Despite Sooryavanshi's crucial 96, GT beat RR to enter the final. A look at the tie and some talking points from IPL...

BCCI BANS SMART SUNGLASSES IN PMOA

The BCCI's Anti-Corruption Unit has barred the usage of smart sunglasses by players and match officials in the ongoing IPL, citing its advanced communication features which allow live streaming and video calling through mobile data or Wi-Fi networks. In an advisory to the league's franchises, the BCCI ACSU has stated that it has been noticed that some companies are marketing and selling smart sunglasses to players and support staff.

If the 97 against Sunrisers Hyderabad made the world stand up and watch Sooryavanshi, the teenager's 96 from 47 balls helped Rajasthan Royals post 214/6 against Gujarat Titans in Qualifier 2. However, it was not enough as skipper Shubman Gill stamped his authority with a brilliant 104, setting Titans' final clash against Royal Challengers Bengaluru.

PANT RESIGNS, PANDYA AND OTHER ON RADAR

While Rishabh Pant stepped down as Lucknow Super Giants captain, he may not be the only one to lose the job after this season. Following a poor show, Mumbai Indians captain Hardik Pandya, Delhi Capitals Axar Patel and even Kolkata Knight Riders' Ajinkya Rahane might not be leading their respective teams next season. | P19

Abetment to suicide case while wife still alive, HC slams IO, frees man

YATHIRAJU @Bengaluru

The Karnataka High Court lambasted an investigating officer for arresting a man on charges of abetting his wife's suicide while she is still alive.

The court said, "The investigating officer (IO) who, without even adverting to the elementary ingredients of the offence punishable under Section 108 of the BNS – abetment to suicide – registered the crime and went on to file the charge sheet even." The high court ordered a departmental inquiry against the IO and immediate release of the petitioner-husband, who is languishing in jail for the last six months for a crime he never committed.

"The petition before this court unveils, in stark relief, a disquieting narrative of mechanical prosecution and reckless invocation of penal provision, resulting in the incarceration of the petitioner for an offence that, on the admitted facts, could never have been alleged in the first place," the court observed, bringing to light the cavalier attitude of the police.

Justice M Nagaprasanna passed the order recently, allowing the petition filed by the 29-year-old husband, who had challenged the criminal proceedings against him based on his wife's complaint.

"What shocks the judicial conscience is not merely the erroneous invocation of the provision, but the grave consequence that followed in its wake. The petitioner-husband has languished behind the prison walls for six long months, deprived of his liberty under the shadow of a charge sheet that could not even remotely sustain legal scrutiny," the judge noted.

The court said the present case is not merely an error of judgment, it is a glaring manifestation of non-application of mind. It is imperative that accountability must follow such abuse of authority. P6

EXPRESS READ

15 die after consuming hooch in Maharashtra

Mumbai: At least 15 people have died after allegedly consuming illicit liquor in Pimpri Chinchwad, on the outskirts of Pune. According to reports, eight deaths were reported initially, but the toll rose to 15 by noon. The deceased include two brothers. While their father survived, he reportedly lost his eyesight | P11

Union Cabinet rejig likely in mid-June

New Delhi: A major reshuffle of the Union Council of Ministers is likely between June 15 and 18, with indications that over a dozen ministers could be dropped or shifted. According to sources, at least two ministers and three MoSes are expected to exit | P12

HCs must pronounce verdict within 3 months of reserving it

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Friday imposed tight timelines on all high courts to issue orders on bail applications and reserved verdicts. It said bail application must be disposed of after hearing within 24 hours. As for reserved judgments, it directed that the verdict be pronounced within three months from the date of reservation.

A two-judge bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi issued a set of binding directions while hearing a petition challenging the Jharkhand High Court's delay in pronouncing judgments in criminal appeals reserved as far back as in 2022.

The court directed that the order of bail or sentence suspension be communicated to the jail authorities as soon as it is pronounced, and that the undertrial or convict should be released, preferably the same day or at most the next day.

If a bail order is reserved, it must be pronounced and uploaded the next day.

If a reserved judgment is not delivered within three months, the Registrar shall place the matter before the chief justice. "The chief justice shall bring it to the notice of the bench within 2 weeks thereafter. If it is still not delivered, the chief justice may assign the case to another bench." If a reasoned judgment is withheld, the operative part may be pronounced in the court, and the reasoned verdict uploaded within 15 days.

NEW TIMELINES

- If judgment is not pronounced within three months from the date of reserving, parties can file an application for release of the judgment. The application should be listed within 2 days
- If the judgment is not pronounced within 3+1 months from the date of reserving, parties can file an application to withdraw the said case and move it over to another bench for fresh arguments
- Reasoned judgment pronounced in open courts should be uploaded on the high court website within 24 hours
- High courts should update their website. The date of reserving judgment shall be reflected in the case status
- If only the operative portion of judgment is delivered, the case status must record it. When the reasoned judgment is uploaded, the parties/advocates shall be informed by email
- The certified copy of the judgments shall mention the date of reserving the judgment, the date of pronouncing the judgment, and the date of uploading it

RBI

UPBEAT ABOUT ECONOMY DESPITE WAR

Outlook for 2026-27 remains positive, supported by strong macroeconomic fundamentals, the RBI said in its annual report | P15